POST OFFICE EMPLOYES PREPARE FOR THE WORLD'S FAIR BY TAKING UP THE STUDY OF LANGUAGES.

Classes in French, German and Spanish are Formed and a Vigorous Struggle to Be Ready to Talk to Foreigners in Their Own Tongues Is Being Made.

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

Postmaster Fred W. Baumhoff and many of his employes are becoming linguists. They are taking lessons twice a week in French, Spanish and German.

And it is all because of the coming World's Fair.

Mr. Baumhoff and his men realize that the St. Louis post office, already metropolitan, is soon to be cosmopolitan in the broadest sense. Even now they are getting letters every day, in every language spoken by man; and the proportion of them is increasing at a ratio which makes it necessary to have in the post office men who can read and talk in a reasonable number of them.

Most of the letters are in regard to World's Fair matters, and most of them come addressed to "The Postmaster"—at least, that is the English interpretation of the language used.

Mr. Baumhoff considers that this foretells a great influx of foreigners. And he is preparing to be ready for them. He points out that while the World's Fair will not be formally opened for two years, a great part of the business in connection with it will be done in advance—that there will be many men from foreign countries who will talk in foreign tongues and must have their mail just the same.

So the idea came to him that it would be better to have his clerks—and himself—familiar with the three of the four principal languages, and to that end opened negotiations with Professor Marius Beroud, teacher of languages. He also addressed letters to his employes, asking those who cared to take such instruction to acquaint him with the fact. He pointed out that there was nothing compulsory in the matter, but offered the suggestion that an acquaintance with other tongues would probably increase the efficiency of the service.

The result was more than equal to his expectations. Twenty-five persons expressed a desire to study French; thirty desired to study Spanish, and twenty wanted to take up German. Some wanted to study all three of the languages. Mr. Baumhoff himself is struggling with two—German and French.

There are two classes in French, three in Spanish and two in German. The German classes are really graded. In one are the pupils who know nothing of the German language; in the other are those who have more or less acquaintance with it—some of them, as in the case of the Postmaster, having formerly been able to converse in the language, but having later become "rusty."

The excess in the number of those who have decided to take lessons in Spanish may be accounted for by the fact that the World's Fair will be with us but six months or so; the Spanish possessions that we came into in 1898 will be with us always—or at least that is the present expectation. Therefore it is argued that while a knowledge of German and French will be of direct temporary value, familiarity with the Spanish tongue will be of permanent advantage.

"Of course no effort is to be made to acquire an acquaintance with all the languages," said Mr. Baumhoff. "But it is reasonable to suppose that all of the visitors, from all the nations, who come here in connection with the World's Fair, practically all can make themselves understood in either English, French, German or Spanish. Certainly this will be the case with the majority."

At the first lesson, given on Monday of last week, the private office of the Postmaster was used as a schoolroom. It is the intention to secure other quarters after the experiment has passed its initial stages, so that there may not be any interference with post office business as a result of them.

These pictures show that the men have not a monopoly of the desire to increase their efficiency. A large proportion of the women employes are members of the classes. And, so far, they have been fully able to keep pace with their brothers in the study of mysterious tongues.

THE POST OFFICE CLASS.

THE INSTRUCTOR.

M. BEROUD AND MR. BAUMHOFF.

Two Novels in Which the Heroines Are Young Girls...

"Babs the Impossible."

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC.

Sarah Grand, who wrote "The Heavenly Twins," has not surpassed that achievement in the story of "Babs the Impossible." (Harper's.) It is a long story, with many characters wandering about, and extending over several years. Its chief reason for being seems to be that the author wishes to show the folly of bringing up young girls without a knowledge of the reason why the proprieties are necessary.

The story begins thus: "Babs the Impossible sat on the edge of her bed, looking up, with the face of an angel and a heart full of guile. 'I'm bored,' she said. 'What shall I do next?'"

Babs was an exceedingly troublesome daughter, too young to be made a young lady of and too old to be subjected to nursery discipline. She usually did as she pleased, and on this occasion she chose to run across the fields to the castle of the Lords of Cadenhouse and a few other titles. Cadenhouse, something of a recluse, a scholar and an earnest man, had come home after an absence of several years. Babs decided to call on him in his study in the tower. He was astonished.

"You're holding that lamp and looking at me as if you had never seen me before," she said. "You'll not forget me again, I expect."

"Have I seen you before?" said Cadenhouse, puzzled.

"Why, yes. I've sat on your knee and pulled your hair. You weren't so formal then. Don't you remember at Dane Court—Babs?" she said, impatiently.

"Oh, Babs!" he ejaculated, as if that explained everything. "But how you've grown!"

"Now, don't say that like everybody else," said Babs, pouting, "as if it were an unusual thing at my age. Put down the lamp and be more original. Here am I giving you a treat, and you don't seem to be enjoying it a bit."

"You say you came to see the light. Were you not afraid that you might encounter me?"

"Afraid! What is there to be afraid of? I just included the possibility of your catching me as another item to add to the excitement. I hoped to see you without being seen. I was wondering how you'd take it if you caught me," she said. "You look almighty solemn. Are you very much put out?"

"I am very much embarrassed," he assured her. "I am not accustomed to visits from young ladies at this time of night, and I do not know how to entertain them."

"Oh, I'm not a young lady," said Babs. "Get rid of that idea and you'll find yourself more at ease. I'm not even in long dresses, so don't be stiff and proud. It's absurd, you know, with a little girl who was pulling your hair not so very long ago."

"But you would not pull my hair now."

"No, nor sit on your knee; but only because that kind of thing wouldn't be a pleasure to me now."

"Do you do everything that is a pleasure, or that promises to be a pleasure to you?"

"Everything," said Babs. "But the things that were a pleasure last year are not a pleasure this."

"Ah!" said Cadenhouse, "you have learned that lesson, have you?. You perceive already the transient nature of all earthly joys?"

MISS EDITH BROWNING."

"No, that did not strike me, because it does not matter," said Babs. "What I do perceive is the endless variety of earthly joys. I can see one of our earthly joys succeeding another into eternity, and I want to try them all."

Cadenhouse attempted to lecture and reprove the irrepressible Babs, but she would not have it. She sang:

> Oh, I'm a young lady you can't control;
> I haven't a soul! I haven't a soul!

He insisted that it was his duty to tell her mother about her escapade. Babs protested.

"Once you put that idea into her head she'll never have another hour's quiet sleep at night if I'm out of her sight. And she can't be watching me always."

This consideration weighed with Cadenhouse.

"But, look here, Babs," he said, very gravely. "You have your own good name to consider. If you do things like this, what will people think of you?"

"What! You think my good name will suffer because I came to see this place of yours—and you the most respectable gentleman in the neighborhood?"

"But consider the time of night, my dear child."

"Oh, Cadenhouse, for shame!" said Babs. "You don't mean to insinuate that a gentleman is less of a gentleman at midnight than at midday?"

"That is what is popularly supposed," said Cadenhouse grimly.

"Well, I can't help that," said Babs, drawing her cloak around her and throwing the end of it over her shoulder. "It isn't true in your case, and I mean to regulate my life by what is true."

It may well be imagined that, with Babs's ideas, she becam a rather dangerous person, especially to herself. Not only Cadenhouse, who was past 45, but another eligible bachelor of the neighborhood, also past 45, became her victims. Then her indiscretions brought gossip. At 18 she went on a tour of the world with her brother, who had just come of age and come into his property. She was very miserable because she had learned that she loved Cadenhouse, and she thought also she had lost him. So ends the foolish story of a foolish girl.

"The Visits of Elizabeth."

WRITTEN FOR THE SUNDAY REPUBLIC

The young girl is much in evidence in two of the prominent books of the season. In "Babs the Impossible" she is the foolish one who does not know what she wants, and makes a mess of things generally. In "The Visits of Elizabeth" she is more worldly, but bent on having a good time, and ignorant, as it appears, of the intrigue that is going on in society around her. "Elizabeth" is by Eleanor Glyn.

Elizabeth was about 17 when her mother, a rich widow who was in poor health, sent her on a round of visits at English country houses. Nearly all her hosts and hostesses were people of title, and relatives. Most entertaining and amusing descriptions of these same members of the English nobility and their lives occur in Elizabeth's letters to her mother.

When Elizabeth visited her French godmother she was unable to understand the reason for their absurd customs; they seemed absurd to her. Here is a bit of description:

"I have had a proposal! Isn't it too interesting? It all happened at the De Tournelles' last night, but I never blushed or did any of the things they used to in Miss Edgeworth's novels that you have allowed me to read. * * * In the confusion of trying to catch on to the farandole again the Marquis and I were left behind.

"It was then the proposal happened; he did not wait a moment; he talked so fast I could hardly understand him. He said he had heard that it was the custom of our country to speak directly to the person one loved, without consulting the parents; so he hoped I would believe he meant no disrespect, but that he adored me. He had fallen in love at first sight, when he went to review Victorine—that he implored me to fly with him, as his mother would never consent to his marrying an Englishwoman!

I nearly laughed at the ridiculousness of it, only he was so deadly in earnest, and would hold my hand. I said I could not think of such a thing, and would he take me back to the pavilion? He became quite wild then, and said he would kill himself with grief; and such a lot of things about love; but I was so wanting to join in the farandole again—we heard them coming nearer—that my attention was all on that, and I did not listen much.

"Anyway, I am sure runaway matches aren't legal in France, from what I heard Jean saying two nights ago at dinner; and I told him so at last, and that pulled him up short. * * * I was glad to get away from the Marquis, because he looked desperate, and you can't trust foreigners; they have pistols and things in their pockets, and he might have shot me."

She was back in England when Sir Augustus somebody surprised her. "Sir Augustus told me he was struck with me the moment he came into Lady Theodosia's boudoir, and he tried to take hold of my hand. I call it queer, don't you? I suppose it is because they think I am young and want encouraging, but I simply detest it, and I told him so. I said, 'Why should you want to hold my hand?' and when he looked foolish and mumbled something, I just said, 'Because, if you are afraid of falling, and it is to hold on, there is the outside rail of the coach for you; I hate being pawed.' He said I was a disagreeable little thing, and would never get on in life."

A certain Lord Valmond appears quite frequently in Elizabeth's letters. At Chevenix Castle he was there, and asked about her French visit. He said some Frenchwomen were bad, but the men were monkeys. "I said it showed how little he knew about them; I had found them delightful; always polite and respectful and amusing; quite a contrast to some English people one was obliged to meet.

"His eyes blazed like two bits of blue fire, and when he looked like that, it made my heart beat, mamma, I don't know why. He is so nice-looking, of course, no Frenchman could compare to him, but I was obliged to go on praising them because it annoyed him so."

At a ball at Folgambe Place one Lord Doraine wanted to kiss Elizabeth, and she was frightened. Just then Lord Valmond came and took her away.

"We went and sat in the palm place, and there was not a soul there, as every one was dancing; and I really don't know how it happened, I was so upset about that horrid Lord Doraine that Harry tried to comfort me, and we made up our quarrel and—he kissed me—and I hope you won't be very cross, mamma; but somehow I did not feel at all angry. And I thought he was fond of Mrs. Smith, but it isn't, it's me! And we are engaged. And Octavia is writing to you. * * * I shall get married before the Drawing Room in February, because then I can wear a tiara.

EDITH BROWNING INTRODUCED TO THE STAGE BY JEFFERSON.

Miss Edith Browning, a St. Louis young woman, will have an important part with "The Fast Mail" company at the Imperial Theater this week. This is Miss Browning's first visit to this city for some time. She has been on the other side of the world.

It was in St. Louis that Miss Browning (that is not her name, by the way), conceived the notion that she would become an actress. She went to see many managers and many actors. Some were polite, but uninterested; others were rude, and still others told her that if she would succeed she must have New York training and New York experience. This advice was discouraging, for Miss Browning's available capital consisted in 35 cents, and that would pay her way across the big bridge, and not much more.

Undaunted, she went to see Mr. Joseph Jefferson. He was both polite and interested. No, he had nothing now, but at the beginning of his next season in New York he might have something.

At the beginning of his next season Edith Browning was in New York. She had borrowed $100, and she was resolved to put her fortune to the touch. She called at Mr. Jefferson's hotel on the very morning of her arrival. Indeed, when she left the Jersey City ferry she inquired the way to the actor's abode. He had not breakfasted, she was informed. He could not see any one.

"But I have an engagement," and she proffered her card.

Mr. Jefferson was gracious to her, but he really could not remember anything about her. She recalled their conversation in St. Louis.

"Come in to breakfast with me," said the old gentleman, and they discussed their eggs together. She was engaged for a very, very minor part, a part that called for just three words in the entire performance. Edith Browning said them, however, and said them well. She was promoted, but the salary was not large, and there was that debt of $100 to be repaid. She fashioned her own clothes, and she cooked her own meals, carrying a little alcohol stove about in the bottom of her trunk. Determination, hard work and enthusiasm won Edith Browning's battle.

SOCIETY BELLES AND CLUB WOMEN OF JONESBORO ARKANSAS.

MISS ANNA CHILDRESS CLARKE

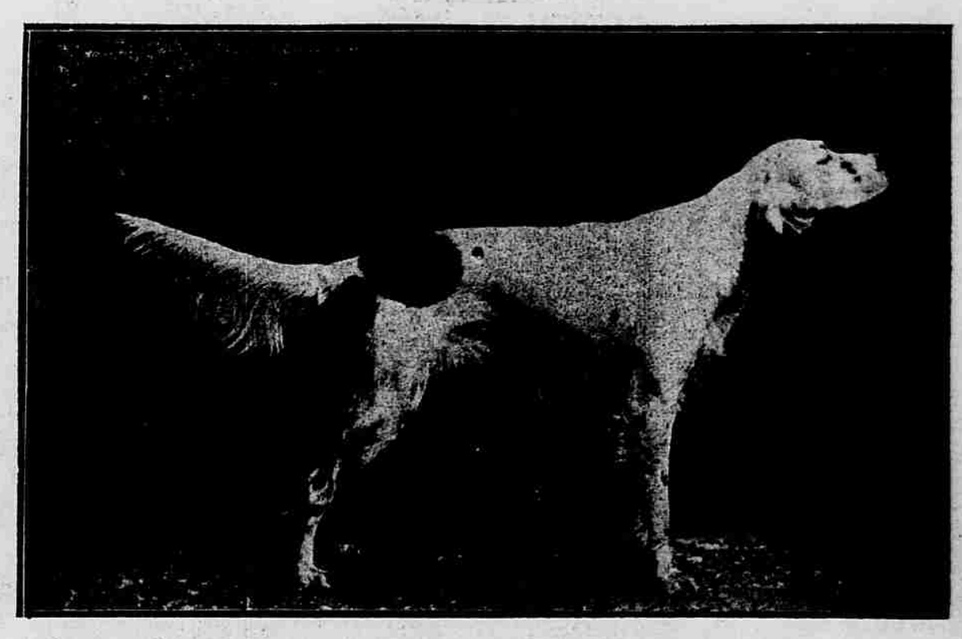
MRS. M. G. WITTMAN

MISS NELLIE DARR.

MISS CLARA THORNTON.

MRS. E. A. PETERSON.

MISS MAUD KENNEDY.



ENGLISH SETTER MODEL.

Lady Cole, pictured above, winner of the solid silver cup for the best English setter under a year old, at the recent New York show, is considered by many experts the most highly perfected specimen of the English Setter now living. In head, ears, coat, feet, legs and outline, she is without flaw. She is owned by Mr. James Cole of Kansas City.